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ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed to help the mature job seeker or career changer establish goals, implement plans, and inspire action. The materials provide action signals to help the mid-life career changer move toward the achievement of career goals. Realities of reentry into the job market are described and an approach to career decision making and job search strategies for the mature job seeker is explained. The unique difficulties and decisions facing reentry women includes discussion of pre-programmed skills, image mistakes, discrimination and self-discreditation, and realistic job possibilities. The role of the college placement and career planning center is explored; resources for investigating employment opportunities and ways to discover the hidden job market of unadvertised jobs are suggested. Hints to insure personal success are listed, focusing on attitudes, personal inventories, resumes, interviews and interview errors, follow-up contacts, and sample interview questions. Elements in a skillful job search and career exploration process are discussed, such as listing prospective employers, researching organizations, interviewing for information, networking, and writing cover letters. Criteria are offered to help job seekers decide which jobs are appropriate for them. Additionally, the acceptance and rejection of offers as well as personal rejections from employers are discussed. (NRB)

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RECAREERING: THE ART OF CHANGE

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THE COLLEGE PLACEMENT COUNCIL

Who are mid-life career changers? Many thousands of men and women in our society are considering upgrading jobs, starting new careers, or reentering the work force after several years' interlude. To effectively seek new employment, they need to identify their problems and chart a course of action.

Technological and economic changes are eliminating some types of jobs, causing workers to seek out new fields of interest and employment. These workers face the challenge of making the necessary adjustments to insure employability.

At one time changing jobs was mainly a man's problem; today it is a woman's problem as well. Modern women are more resourceful, less traditional, and, for a variety of reasons, are looking for personally rewarding and challenging ways to use their time productively. They are reentering the job market.

These women and men career changers are seeking academic training at colleges, universities, and community colleges across the country. As a result, the average age of students is 25 years and going up all the time. The mature student group is also seeking help in structuring their course work to provide the training for jobs with interest, responsibility, and challenge.

Whether for a man or a woman, a mid-life career change in today's complex job market can be a difficult and complicated process, particularly for the person who has been removed from the process of planning and orchestrating a job search. A modern job search is a challenging process, one that requires creativity, dedication, resolve, and enthusiasm.

The techniques of the standard job search involve a number of critical steps:

- *Identify career goals*
- *Research personal assets*
- *Research job market*
- *Design resume*
- *Research prospective employers*
- *Obtain appointment for interview with person who has authority to hire*
- *Interview skillfully*
- *Plan follow-up procedures*

This booklet is designed to help the mature job seeker or career changer establish goals, implement plans, and inspire action. Recognizing the obstacles to finding employment and

designing appropriate strategy to handle these obstacles will facilitate the job search and distinguish the candidate from the competition.

An old truism, "Nothing ventured, nothing gained," is still valid. Action is the only way to achieve a goal. The aim of this pamphlet is to provide some solid action signals to help the mid-life career changers move confidently toward achieving career goals.

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Realities of Re-Entry

Mature job seekers or job changers are persons usually over 35 years of age, with or without previous work experience, who are making the transition, through a process of career development, into the next phase of their life's work. Career development is an evolving progression. Through various kinds of work, people can reach forth to meet career goals in a life-long process.

Successful job seeking for the re-entry candidate lies both in specialization and diversification. Comprehensive knowledge of a particular field is imperative, but other skill areas should complement this expertise. Such flexibility increases the options available. Philosophy majors will have difficulty finding employment as philosophers with undergraduate degrees. Yet their job opportunities can be expanded with courses in public relations, economics, and public communication. Both men and women returning to the business world will find their opportunities expanded by a knowledge of contemporary computer functions and modern business procedures.

Modern businesses are generally not interested in persons who are overly specialized or narrowly trained. Management seeks employees who have a record of past performance and skills that offer greater flexibility for job placement.

The mature applicant may be qualified for many different work situations. Identification of personal skills is critical to success in the job search. Age can be used to advantage in convincing a prospective employer of ability in problem-solving, people management, and communication.

The mature person's job search will not resemble the traditional job search of new college graduates, who usually find themselves in a favored position in the job market. Mature persons must understand the basic barriers to immediate employability that they may face: for example, an inability to relocate or travel, limited training in the field, or unwillingness to retrain. They also face challenges regarding age, sex, or physical characteristics. Even more serious obstacles may be lack of information about the job market, lack of self-knowledge, and lack of understanding of how to use one's assets.

To deal effectively with the realities of the world of work, job seekers must accent the positive elements of their personal qualifications, their creativity, and their willingness to risk time and resources to reach preferred goals. What works for one person may not be successful for another.

The Mature Job Seeker

A sense of direction is vital to success in any undertaking, including the job search or career change. It can become the inspiration of action or the inner drive that translates desires and ambitions into specific achievements.

Establishing personal goals is the first step in the job search.

- What type of job or career do I want?
- In what type of setting?
- With what level of responsibilities?
- With what kind of people?
- With what type of products and/or services?
- At what salary?

Personal experiences, including jobs or volunteer work, should provide answers.

The focus on setting goals should include factors which influence specific career choices:

- Personal interests and ambitions
- Facilities available for education or training
- Personal finances, including time to obtain required education or training

Individuals opting for top-level jobs may need graduate degrees. Employers usually require baccalaureate degrees for management positions. In some situations, practical experience may satisfy the requirements for many job opportunities. Some employers provide specific on-the-job training or special classes. Generally, a college degree will give one applicant preference over another individual with no degree.

Make what you are work for you. Accentuate the positive. Determine those qualities that make you desirable and employable. Identify tangible assets you have by virtue of your age and experience that magnify your suitability for employment. Answer these two questions:

"What do I do that others want?"

"What do I know that others need?"

Let your maturity and experience work to your advantage:

- Knowledge of people, products, services
- Experience and accomplishments in work and volunteering
- Judgment and decision-making abilities
- Poise, style, grooming
- Self-confidence
- Communication skills

Design your career goals to allow room for alternatives to broaden your employment options as much as possible. Your best opportunity may be a position that does not immediately offer the expected responsibility and salary but holds the prospect of advancement and challenge. If you are open-minded and flexible, your chances will be enhanced considerably.

A well-organized approach to career decision making and job search strategy will increase possibilities for finding employment. Securing a suitable position will not be left entirely to chance. Mature job seekers should not try to compete with the energy and enthusiasm of new college graduates in qualifying for youth-oriented positions. Instead, a careful assessment and understanding of developed personal assets helps identify employment possibilities where maturity and practical experience are valued. In the modern job market, it is essential to success to be realistic in marketing skills and qualifications to potential employers.

The Re-Entry of Women

The information and suggestions in this publication are applicable to all job seekers regardless of sex. However, some unique problems in re-entering the job market can confront today's women. For this reason, the following section outlines the difficulties and decisions that many women must resolve. The rest of the booklet again addresses itself to the universal decisions and procedures men and women need to consider in career changing.

The U.S. Department of Labor reports that two-fifths of U.S. manpower is now "womanpower," that 65 percent of all women who work do so for economic reasons, and that one out of 10 women workers is the head of a

family. Traditionally, women have been an important component of the workforce, filling the ranks of school teachers, nurses, secretaries, social workers, salespersons, clerks, and other jobs which in the past were typically categorized for females.

Emancipated American women enter or re-enter the world of work with high expectations, seeking meaningful opportunities and the personal fulfillment of an interesting career. They are searching not only for a second paycheck but for a source of enjoyment, independence, and a greater sense of personal identity.

Modern technology has also contributed to the emancipation of American women with dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers, microwave ovens, food processors, prepared foods, and wash and wear clothing, all of which lessen household maintenance. Boredom and dissatisfaction with lifestyles have motivated women to seek new interests when their children reach school age. Contemporary life has freed women to train their minds and move more freely in society, and many have chosen to put this new freedom to work.

Educational institutions have been impacted by thousands of women who have returned to campuses to prepare themselves for professional careers. Eleven percent of college students are women over 35 years of age.

A large percent of women returning to college campuses have already completed four-year degrees and many have advanced degrees; a significant number have attended colleges for a year or more. Their re-education requirements divide them into categories:

Retrainers: Those who need to update former skills to "fine tune" them to the needs of modern business.

The Upward Bound: Those who invest in additional education for the purpose of job improvement and upward mobility in present jobs.

New Career Seekers: Those who aspire to new professions for which total educational preparation is required.

Career Explorers: Those who need exposure to various kinds of career options before making decisions.

Shoppers: Those with an urge to change but who are undecided about life goals and need professional counseling.

Pre-Programmed Skills and Competencies

Many women with college educations who chose to be homemakers and raise families have been active in political, civic, school, cultural, welfare, and business fields. In dealing with a multitude of organizational settings and situations, an individual's ability to work with people, products, factions, money, budgets, politics, and programs is improved remarkably. Many women have stepped into public relations, organizational, and management positions as a result of training received in volunteer positions. Because of their experience and maturity, they are the very employees that organizations hire and promote. The fact that the services were voluntary and free should not cause employers or applicants to underestimate the value of these experiences.

Frequently, neither women themselves nor potential employers are aware of existing competencies. Preliminary identification of competencies will enable many women to assess those qualities that can be transferred to a work situation. The concept merits study and serious consideration by all

women who have given a considerable amount of their valuable time serving in volunteer or organizational work.

Analytical ability
Articulation
Budgeting
Communication skills
Conceptualization
Dedication
Diplomacy
Fund-raising ability
Initiative
Listening skills
Logic
Permanence
Persuasiveness
Poise
Problem-solving skills
Qualitative ability
Quantitative ability
Tact
Tenacity
Writing ability

Image Mistakes as Seen by Employers

Research has uncovered eight areas where real problems exist:

1. **Confidence and Self-Esteem.** The number one problem! When looking for a job, women lose confidence, and it shows in their appearance, manner, and speech. It also shows in their resumes (or lack of them) and their ability to cope with the interview situation.

2. **Goal Identification.** Usually women cannot answer the question, "What do you want to do and why?" If a woman has difficulty answering this question when searching for a career position, further questions appear useless.

3. **Attitude.** Women need to develop professional attitudes concerning punctuality and dependability, commitment to the job, and priorities among work, home, family, and social considerations. A professional career cannot be seen as a time-filler or just something to do.

4. **Interpersonal Relations.** The mature job seeker can make an effective presentation to prospective employers by emphasizing skills in behavioral science, group dynamics, and teamwork.

5. **Specific Skill Training.** Women should take courses for current business procedures, office equipment, and the application of computers. Even though positions might not require these skills, a background would be beneficial in understanding modern business operation.

6. **Professional Sales Training.** Ability in sales can be of tremendous help to anyone in business, not just in terms of marketing a product, but in the *ability to sell an image, to sell a company, to sell one's self.* Real estate, for example, is an excellent field where a woman's opportunities for success are nearly equal to a man's. A real estate training program prepares a woman to sell herself, gain a professional image, and obtain important business knowledge.

7. **Basic Business Procedures.** Knowledge of economics, basic business procedures, basic accounting, and business math, along with the language of business in general, is valuable. Internship experiences are helpful in providing women with practical "hands-on" experience that no classroom situation can provide.

8. **Preconceived Prejudices.** Although sex discrimination is now illegal, a woman applicant may encounter undercurrents of prejudice. Awareness of such attitudes prepares the applicant to cope with and even dispell preconceived ideas. For example, women may find some resistance in entering engineering, mining, law, or medicine, as well as some areas above the

secretarial level in business. If women are prepared to answer prejudicial questions or statements in a knowledgeable, professional way and a confident manner, they have a better chance to overcome preconceived prejudicial attitudes employers may have.

Discrimination vs. Self-Discreditation

It is easier to feel discrimination than to consider the cause of the feelings or the situation which brought about the hurt. A woman's maturity should provide objective attitudes for introspection to avoid discreditation of her worth and deal with problems.

Women tend to apologize for their qualifications rather than maximize them. Employers are usually hiring for promotability, and the interview is the prime time to emphasize qualifications. At the first meeting the candidate can clearly spell out skills, competencies, and talents. Employers hire on the basis of cost effectiveness: which candidate will make the best contribution to the organization. Therefore, it is even more important for a woman than for a man to build her credibility and prevent her competency from being discredited.

The interview is the time to "take charge," but not in the sense of conducting the interview; that is the role of the interviewer. Information critical to the candidate must be introduced and properly discussed. The interviewee must plan strategy, be able to keep mental notes, watch for clues to the interviewer's feelings, and gauge the presentation accordingly.

Realistic Job Possibilities

When a woman has found a job possibility, she should determine the exact characteristics of the work. To be successful in a job, one must know what it entails. Does it require detail work, ability to work with people, a good memory, persuasive qualities, problem solving, and decision making? If working with people is required, will the employee need to supervise, judge strengths and weaknesses, or make recommendations? If the job is in sales, for example, will it require knowledge of ethical conduct and integrity, ability to pursue details, and common sense problem solving?

The College Placement and Career Planning Center

College and university placement centers are usually in the mainstream of the prevailing job market and can provide valuable assistance to former graduates, translating job search efforts into success.

Most placement facilities maintain on-going job listings and prepare and mail job vacancy bulletins to alumni. Expert counselors can explore possible job openings in specific fields through identification of local and national employer contacts. Career information libraries in most placement offices house collections of occupational information, directories, job market trends, salary reports, trade and professional journals, and current employer literature. Most organizations recruiting college graduates will provide informational pamphlets describing career opportunities. These materials should be carefully researched in preparation for interviews.

Placement center services usually include professional career counseling to assist candidates in self-assessment, development of realistic career goals, and decision making. Inquire about help with resume preparation and fine-tuning of interview skills.

Placement centers with career planning emphasis are usually very willing to spend time with individuals considering college for additional training and/or completion of degrees in preparation for re-entering the job market.

The Wide, Wide World of Work

Go Find Yourself an Employer

The modern job market is always changing in perspective, fluctuating with the economy and technological advancements. Some jobs vanish and new ones emerge.

Observe businesses that are expanding, have received government or private contracts, have built new facilities or remodeled old ones, or have announced plans for any of these activities.

Do some exploring. When an organization is in a hiring position, all of the potential job openings may not be advertised. The mature job seeker should investigate future possibilities and, whenever possible, *apply for a specific job opening.*

Job opportunities can be found through a variety of resources:

- Local newspaper classified ads
- Trade and professional journals
- Chamber of Commerce directories
- Manufacturers' directories
- Dun & Bradstreet or Moody's Handbook
- College placement offices
- State employment offices
- Public libraries

These directories and sources will usually classify firms by products and services offered and include descriptions of them.

The Hidden Job Market

It is estimated that 85 percent of the jobs above menial work are not advertised. The job market is like an iceberg; the real opportunities are hidden below the surface. The suggestion follows that employers are always looking for competent, qualified people.

The candidate finds these "hidden" jobs by establishing personal contacts, by "networking" (the grapevine technique), and by using informational interviewing techniques.

There is neither an optimist nor pessimist—
only a possibilist. *Anonymous*

Program Yourself for Success

Adopt the Positive Attitude

To understand your potential, you need to know yourself: who you are, what you can do, and what you want to accomplish. You also need to understand where you can best use your talents to satisfy your needs.

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If possible, attend classes or workshops in self-analysis to gain insight and the necessary commitment you must make to have a professional career. If you can comfortably verbalize answers to these questions you will project confidence, self-esteem, and a positive attitude.

Take a Personal Inventory

The initial step in writing a marketable, professional resume is identification and organization of qualifications, personal skills, and competencies into a written list such as the one below:

1. **People Skills.** Management, supervisory, interactive, persuasive, sensitivity to attitudes/feelings, listening, leadership, facility to promote work.
2. **Dexterity Skills.** Writing, typing, computer usage, athletic ability, operating machines, mechanical ability, tool usage.
3. **Sales Skills.** Speaking creatively, thinking on your feet, persuasiveness, the talent to influence, perceptiveness, and problem-solving.
4. **Motivation Skills.** Self-starting, planning, organizing, action-directed, achievement-oriented.
5. **Data Skills.** Budgeting, accounting, analysis, statistics, financial reporting, appraising, reasoning, computing, compiling.
6. **Creative Skills.** Art, graphic or interior design, composing music, writing, conceiving ideas.

Next, again on paper, list educational training, including degrees, colleges, universities, technical courses, and awards and honors.

List and analyze any hobbies and special interests. These lists will facilitate recall in the interview, make you a stronger job candidate, and bring more self-assurance to the job campaign.

When the survey of educational background, skills, competencies, special interests, and hobbies is complete and work experiences are listed, the next important step is design of the resume.

Go First Class

Never underestimate the importance of a resume. It is an autobiography, projecting individual educational background, accomplishments, hobbies, skills, and attitudes. It communicates personal pride and uniqueness, attitudes immeasurably important to a potential employer. Success may depend upon it!

Employers often use resumes to eliminate candidates. If a resume has any typing errors, misspelled words, strikeovers, or smudges, or if it is too long, contains unessential data, and is generally unattractive, the employer may view the candidate as being sloppy, careless, or unprofessional. If duplicated, resumes should be printed on high-quality bond paper, avoiding a mass production effect.

Many books are available on the writing of professional resumes. Study the different styles suggested and choose one according to personal requirements.

The type style should be clearly legible. As white is the most common paper choice, consider using off-white, light grey, tan, light blue, or light green to distinguish it from others on the employer's desk. Avoid going to extremes, however, in paper and resume format. "Way-out" styles usually turn employers off.

After writing a rough draft, have someone knowledgeable read and critique it. Ask for evaluation in terms of its marketability, its reflection of individuality and qualifications, and its suitability for a specific type of job. Keep in mind that employers are interested in accuracy, facts, experience, clarity of goals, and maturity.

The statement of goals is of prime importance. Express career aspirations clearly and decisively. This part of the resume may be the most difficult to prepare, and different employment opportunities may require different career goal statements.

A Powerful Interview[1]

You only have one opportunity to make a "first" good impression![2]

Mature job seekers are expected to interview in a manner in harmony with their experience and knowledge. The image projected should reflect poise and judgment and be appropriate for the business or work situation. A "corporate image"[3] is required of both men and women, and the business world places special emphasis upon appropriate appearance and manner. Avoid flashy clothing, garish jewelry, heavy makeup, or extreme hairstyles. Dress for the job you want, not for the job you may have.

Good quality clothing is an investment in a professional future. People are influenced by appearances. A good appearance gives the impression of self-control.

Always arrive early for the interview, allowing a few minutes to observe the surroundings and gather thoughts. Have paper and a pen for recording details such as the name and title of the interviewer.

Try to concentrate on other people and forget about yourself. Use direct eye contact, smile, and show warmth. Observe all the laws of good etiquette and take cues from the interviewer. Avoid using first names, even if your first name is used. Have a firm handshake at the beginning and ending of the interview. Never smoke, even if invited. If invited to lunch, accept if possible as this is a compliment and a very special opportunity for you to meet other members of the organization. Remember, the evaluation continues, even at lunch.

During the interview try to make comments that will make you stand out from other candidates. *You are hired on the basis of your potential contribution and not for what the organization can do for you.* Have well-prepared questions regarding the organization and the work; these are a vital part of every interview.

At the conclusion of the meeting, be sure to ask what more you should do to provide information, and when you will hear about the employer's decision. Keep the door open for future contacts.

The Follow-Up

Courtesy suggests that a letter always follow up an interview, expressing appreciation for the opportunity to discuss the job. Express sincere interest in the company, reinforce individual strong points and special qualifications, and emphasize potential contribution to their company. This letter, with another copy of the resume, again separates you from the other candidates. A telephone call or a letter from a third party may also have favorable impact.

Frequent Errors

Poor eye contact shows insecurity; nervous habits are distracting to the interviewer and smoking is inappropriate. Meaningless chatter is annoying; use any moments of silence to collect your thoughts. Don't confide in the interviewer and do not volunteer personal information. Avoid sloppy speech or the use of slang or swear words.

Frequent Questions

What do you have to offer?
What are your career goals?
Why are you changing jobs?
What kind of salary do you expect?
What are your strengths? Your weaknesses?
Why are you applying for a job with our company?

Often directed to women:

Why do you want to work?
Are you committed to a career?

Think positively and extend yourself so that the interview can be a pleasant social exchange of information in which both parties develop respect and a sincere interest in each other.

How to Get From Here to There

Finding the right position should not be left to chance. The job seeker, not the employer, must be in command in the job search. A skillful job search will facilitate connections with employers who can offer the most satisfactory career opportunities. This critical career exploration process will promote awareness of the multitude of available options; many skills are transferable to a variety of employment fields.

Develop a List of Prospective Employers

Use available resources to start a list of corporations or organizations to research. Include addresses, telephone numbers, personnel officers, and contact persons.

Identify the types of jobs which hold particular interest. While researching each company, try to identify the most powerful person available for an interview. This step is extremely important.

Research Each Organization

Use directories such as Dun & Bradstreet, Moody's, Chamber of Commerce directories, city directories, and financial reports, found in most city libraries and college placement offices. Ask business community leaders and educators for information. Read trade journals, newspapers, business magazines, and any other available sources for generalized or specific data. Many employers publish formal company literature that may be available through direct contacts or college placement offices.

Be informed about each potential employer. This knowledge, along with meaningful questions, will be extremely effective during the interview.

Informational Interviewing

Informational interviewing is probably the most important job search strategy in accessing information about a particular field of interest and possible opportunities. This process gathers information about a particular organization through meeting with its management and decision-makers, general managers, departmental managers, vice-presidents and even presidents. The interview does exactly what the title implies: discovers how the organization functions, learns about its products and services, its business environment, the extent of its territory, sales, influence and major challenges. Ask questions about its long-term and short-term goals, interests, and the value issues of its management.

The entire interview should take place without indicating any interest in employment. Its purpose is to gather information about a particular field of business to determine problems and needs as perceived by those most closely involved.

Watch for unique comments or ideas that give insight into the thinking or philosophy of management. These hints may furnish valuable clues to the job and can help design a future approach for employment.

The executive interviewed now becomes a contact person in that particular organization. Send a follow-up letter or make a telephone call expressing appreciation for the time spent in the interview and conveying positive impressions of the company. The possibility of future employment with the company can be appropriately indicated at this point. If contacting the organization's personnel office for an application, mention the interview with an official of the organization. Use the technique of contacting persons as creatively as possible.

Networking

Chances of success can be increased by creating a network of contact persons. A network consists of friends, relatives, peers, former and current employers, teachers, physicians, insurance agents, bankers, and neighbors. Other potential networkers are members of church, professional, civic, political, and fraternal organizations.

People know people, and people are usually willing to extend themselves. They will suggest other influential persons to contact. They may even know about specific job vacancies.

When possible, establish contact with important persons in the field. Attend conferences, conventions, workshops, or other affairs where contacts can be made. Ask for advice from knowledgeable persons when discussing qualifications and background.

As networking develops, keep records of contacts with addresses and telephone numbers. Concentrate on remembering names and faces. People are impressed when they are remembered. Have resumes available, as well as other relevant credentials.

Networking can extend beyond geographic confines, and an investment of time spent expanding these contacts can produce dividends throughout your career.

People With the Power to Hire

The ultimate goal is to reach the person within the power structure who makes the decision. *Who you know is as important as what you know.*

Networking and informational interviewing provide a link to the people with power, and individual presentation must be impressive. Be ready for intelligent, penetrating questions. Give careful consideration to personal appearance and effect: dress, attitude, mannerisms. Every moment is a moment of judgment for suitability.

Cover Letters

When using a resume to seek an interview or as a follow-up, a letter must accompany both. This letter, known as a cover letter, adds a personal touch to the application. It must reflect on the individual as a viable candidate, show sincere interest in the organization, and state what you can offer when employed. This cover letter must be attractive, professional, well written, and confident. Without superlatives, indicate unique or distinctive attributes. This is a great advantage. Keep in mind that employers are looking for original and self-motivated people; willingness, ambition, and the ability to communicate and make decisions are qualities that the mature job seeker should project.

Which is the Right Job for You?

The quality of life depends to a great degree on the individual's work environment. Therefore, the next step in the career development process, the choice of a job, is of prime importance for the future. With a systematic job search process, the job seeker will be in control and can find a career that allows achievement of potential.

Consider the following decisive criteria:

1. Redefine the decision to be made. Look at each situation and job offer realistically in terms of career goals and the job's potential for advancement.
2. Check all information. Are the details of the job offer clear? Is the job description complete?
3. List alternatives or options. Are other prospective offers available? Is the field expanding? Are other opportunities on the horizon? Would a change of career direction that might offer better jobs be acceptable?
4. Are there risks? Is the job permanent? Does it require lifestyle concessions such as travel or relocation? Does the company change personnel frequently? Verify salary information.
5. Note the employer's requirement for acceptance or rejection. Does it allow time for a rational decision? Does it create pressure?

Acceptance of the Offer

Both offer and acceptance can be verbal. However, it is wise to have both offer and response in writing for protection of both the employer and the candidate.

Rejection of the Offer

This response can also be verbal, but, as common courtesy, it is wise to write the employer and provide reasons for not taking the offer, particularly if reapplication at some later date is a possibility.

Rejections to the Applicant

Because applicants outnumber positions offered, it is obvious that all job seekers will not get a job they would like. Rejections are commonplace, even for new college graduates. This reality may be particularly difficult for the mature job seeker to cope with because of a tendency to regard rejection as discreditation. Not being chosen does not downgrade individual qualifications or personal worthiness. Applicants may profit from the interviews as a learning experience to become a more seasoned interviewee, projecting a smoother, more competent image of personal abilities.

Conclusion

Seize this very minute! What you can do,
or think you can do, begin it. *Goethe*

Mid-life career changers may be entering the world of work in one of the best times ever. Career fields are in a period of great change. The majority of all jobs expected to be in high demand after 1985 do not even exist today. Change is a way of life for most Americans, and the average worker is expected to hold from two to five jobs during a lifetime.

Good jobs don't grow on trees; they grow out of smaller jobs. If performance is effective, a less important job may open the door to a better future position.

Try to be imaginative, creative, and energetic in a working situation. The future does not necessarily belong with the very young anymore. The future belongs to those who prepare for it!

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